Editor Attacks Post Article on Spies

From News Dispatches

LONDON, Jan. 14—The foreign editor of The London Times said today that Washington Post London correspondent Bernard D. Nossiter had endangered British foreign correspondents by asserting that many of them are spies.

The Times editor, Louis Heren, called the statement "a McCarthyist smear" and "a damning and damnable charge, which can be neither proved nor disproved," and said that publication of Nossiter's article "could put a gun at the head of British reporters abroad."

Nossiter wrote in the Dec. 23 issue of The Post that "A remarkable number of British journalists abroad are reputed to be officers" of the British intelligence service and that "an unknown number" of British spies "are posing as journalists."

His article continued:

"A contributing editor at one of Britain's most distinguished journals estimates that more than half of that particular paper's fulltime foreign staffers are on the (British intelligence) payroll. There is no evidence, however," Nossiter added, "that this high proportion is found elsewhere in Fleet Street."

The only name Nossiter mentioned as a journalist-spy was that of Kim Philby, who was a double agent for the British and Soviet intelligence services as well as Beirut correspondent for The Observer and the Economist in 1962 before he defected to Moscow.

Heren, in his signed commentary on the Times' editorial page, called Nossiter's article "a sloppy piece of misreporting" and said that his newspaper "does not rely on London or Moscow gold to keep its correspondents in the field. I cannot believe that other reputable British or American newspapers would be foolish enough to take such tainted money."

He said foreign correspondents have "collectively a reputation of integrity and independence," although "Presumably there are one or two black sheep."

"I cannot swear," Heren wrote, "that some obscure person masquerading as a correspondent is actually working for the CIA, KGB or SIS," Britain's intelligence service. "For all I know, B. Nossiter is working for one of them.

"I do not believe that he is," Heren wrote, "but after his McCarthyist smear he might find it difficult to persuade the trigger-happy otherwise—that is, if he worked on those occasionally dangerous frontiers instead of from the safety of Washington, Geneva and London."

Nossiter, who is based in London, was en route to the Angola war.

Iceland Earthquake

HUSAVIK, Iceland, Jan. 14 (UPI)—Teams of rescue crews battled an Arctic blizzard today to rescue villagers stranded by Iceland's strongest earthquake since 1934.